

Upland, PA – In one of the most well-recognized photographs in history, five U.S. Marines and a Navy corpsman stand raising a flag on Japan's Mount Suribachi, in the midst of the Battle of Iwo Jima. The picture was captured during one of the most intense battles of World War Two's Pacific Theater; the U.S. military prevailed, but lost nearly 7,000 troops, and saw another 20,000 wounded during the battle that lasted from February 19, 1945 to March 26, 1945.

— On Sunday, February 17, the Delaware County Marine Corps League Detachment of Upland honored the group's Iwo Jima veterans at a ceremony at the group's headquarters. Earlier in the day, they held a breakfast meeting, which was attended by Congressman Joe Sestak (PA -07), who visited with the veterans and thanked them for their military service.

"I was honored to visit with the Delco Marine Corps League Detachment on this day they set aside to honor those who fought bravely in the Battle of Iwo Jima," said Congressman Sestak. "The courageous U.S. Marines who fought in this battle ushered in the final stages of World War II, and I thank them today for their service to our nation."

During his first term in office, Congressman Sestak, recognized by the House historian as the highest-ranking former military member ever elected to Congress, has drafted and voted in favor of legislation that supports active military members, veterans and their families. He recently voted for the Heroes Earning Assistance and Relief Tax Act (H.R. 3997), which includes tax provisions intended to assist military personnel and their families, veterans and public service volunteers. In addition, he supported the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill which provided the largest single increase to the Veterans Administration budget in its 77 year history — \$6.7 billion additional dollars for the Veterans Administration. With passage of this bill, the 110th Congress voted for historic increases in veterans' health care and benefits programs, totaling nearly \$12 billion (including the joint resolution and the supplemental), to meet the needs of returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Congressman Sestak also successfully passed two amendments to H.R. 1538, the Wounded Warrior Assistance Act, which will improve mental health care for our wounded soldiers as well as our veterans. The first amendment highlights the fact that mental health care is an essential component to the medical services offered to our veterans and the members of our Armed Services by clarifying that "medical care" as defined in H.R. 1538 includes mental health care services. The second amendment requires the Secretary of the Department of Defense to develop a plan to help prevent Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other stress-related psychopathologies (including substance abuse conditions) from developing in our military service members. Both amendments passed with unanimous support.

Additionally, Congressman Sestak recently voted for, and the House of Representatives passed, H.R. 4253, the Military Reservist and Veteran Small Business Reauthorization and Opportunity Act of 2007. HR 4253 will provide America's veterans and reservists some of the economic security they deserve by: strengthening federal efforts to expand opportunities for veteran-owned businesses; providing new small business loans and expanding outreach to veteran-owned small businesses; strengthening relief to small businesses employing National

Guard or Reserve troops.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.